



City news,
features,
and
updates

This Week in Huntsville

July 10,
2015

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Huntsville, at 180, you look mahvelous!

Happy birthday, Huntsville, you're turning 180 on July 12, but you look better than ever! Visit the City History page (<http://www.huntsvilletx.gov/396/History>) on the new website to reminisce. Having just celebrated our nation's birth, we are especially aware of how fortunate we are to live where we do -

Huntsville, Texas, USA!

The City remembered special years all over the community for the Demi-Semi-Centennial in 2010.

'Sister' sends wishes for Happy Birthday

Greetings to the People of Huntsville, Texas:

As mayor and on behalf of the City Council of the City of Huntsville, Alabama, I would like to take this opportunity to extend to the people of Huntsville, Texas, our sincere congratulations on the occasion of your Sesquicentennial Celebration.

We are honored to have Huntsville, Texas, as our namesake and as our sister city and wish all her citizens the very best that life has to offer. please accept the enclosed resolution, passed by our city council, as a gesture of friendship and goodwill between our cities.

We know that as you celebrate your 150th anniversary, you are indeed proud to be a part of such a vital and progressive community.

Again, best wishes from the people of Huntsville, Alabama.

Joe W. Davis
Mayor
City of Huntsville, Alabama

RESOLUTION

Whereas the city of Huntsville celebrated its 150th year with the sesquicentennial celebration in 1955, commemorating its 150-year history from 1805; and

Whereas the city of Huntsville was first known as Hunts Spring because of the great spring which is located at 612 feet above sea level and flows 24 million gallons per day; and

Whereas, the name was changed in 1808 by legislative action to Twickenham for Alexander Pope's English estate, and then in 1911 to Huntsville after John Hunt; and

Whereas, during the 1820s or 1830s there lived in Huntsville a man named Pleasant Gray; and

Whereas, about 1835 Pleasant Gray and Hannah Gray moved to an area now part of the state of Texas, secured land from the Mexican government and established a town, set up a trading post, and shortly thereafter began selling town lots; and

Whereas, because of similarities between the area and his former residence in Huntsville, Alabama, Pleasant Gray named the town "Huntsville"; and

Whereas, the cities of Huntsville, Alabama, and Huntsville, Texas, therefore have a special kinship, having both been established in the early 19th century, and having both prospered as desirable places to live and work; and

Whereas, the mayor and the City Council of the City of Huntsville, Alabama, wish to express congratulations and best wishes to its sister city and namesake, the City of Huntsville, Texas.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of the City of Huntsville, Alabama, that the congratulations and best wishes of the City of Huntsville and all its people are hereby extended to our sister city of Huntsville, Texas, on the occasion of its 150th anniversary.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to the governing body of Huntsville, Texas, and to the media of both great cities of Huntsville.

Adopted and approved the 11th day of July 1985

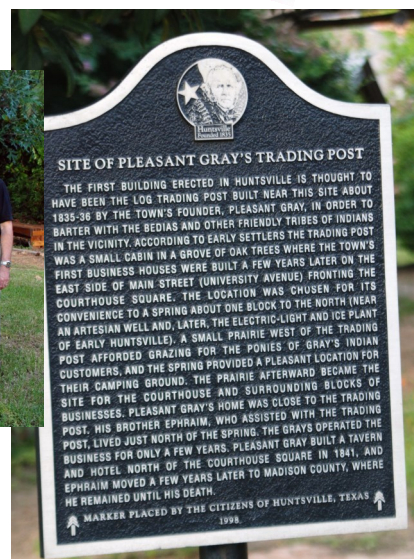
Signed,
The Huntsville City Council
Huntsville, Alabama



Left: From The Huntsville Item, July 13, 1985, 150th birthday wishes and Resolution of celebration from the City of Huntsville, Alabama



Above: Descendants of Pleasant Gray in 2010. Right: Historic marker about the original trading post. (Photos courtesy of Candy Dixon)



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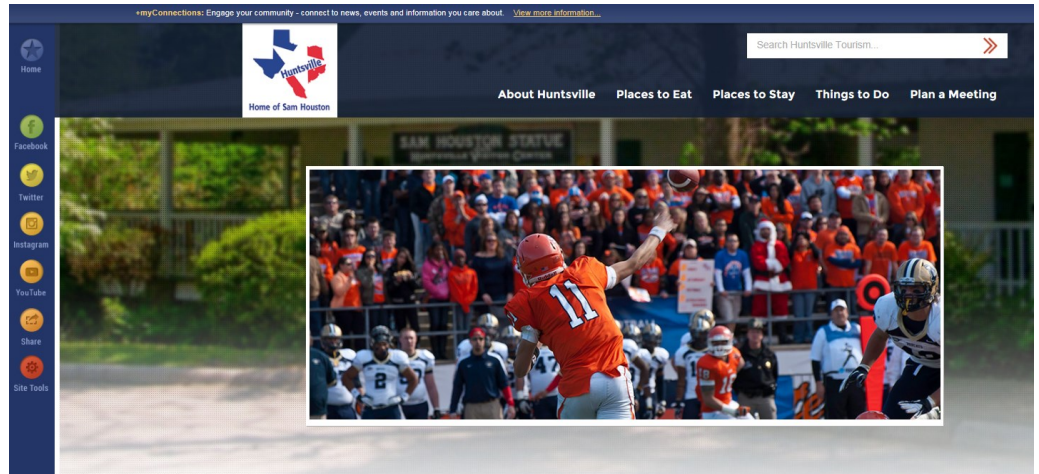
Genealogy weekend - page 2

Fur, fangs, & fun at HPL - Page 5

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Don't forget - the new City and Department of Tourism and Cultural Services websites went live on June 25! Come see the new layouts, test special feature buttons on the home pages, and subscribe for news, events, and publications!



Frances Sprott Goforth Memorial Genealogy Weekend, July 31-August 1

Huntsville Public Library and the Walker County Genealogical Society (WCGS) will host the annual Frances Sprott Goforth Memorial Genealogy Weekend on Friday, July 31 and Saturday, August 1, in the Library's Community Room. Friday's session is from 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Saturday's session is from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The free "lock-in" event will feature presentations on Immigration and Emigration Records, African-American Research, Spanish and Mexican Archives, Czech Heritage, and Hints on Writing Your Family History. A light supper will be served on Friday by WCGS members. There will also be a silent auction beginning on Thursday, July 30 at 10:00 a.m. and ending on Saturday at 1:30 p.m.

Pre-registration is encouraged, but not required. For more information or to register online go to www.huntsvilletx.gov, or contact Mary Kokot, Adult Services Coordinator, at 936-291-5471.

9-1-1 is ONLY for Emergencies

Please remember, and teach children and others, to only contact 9-1-1 for in-progress emergencies.

There may be an increased number of phone calls at all 9-1-1 centers during times of severe weather or disaster.

If you have an emergency:

- 1) Call 9-1-1, stay on the line and don't hang up until your call is answered.
- 2) Answer all questions
- 3) Follow all instructions

It is important not to overload the phone systems at the emergency call centers with non-emergency calls, especially during times of emergency and disaster.

Do not contact 9-1-1 to check on the status of the weather, power outages, or for other non-emergency inquiries.

It is best to stay tuned to local media for weather, flooding, and traffic updates.

For non-emergency assistance, call the Walker County Public Safety Communications Center at 936-435-8000. They will take your information and dispatch the appropriate services.

Call 9-1-1 only *When a Life is On the Line* - for emergency assistance from police, fire, or medical emergency services.

The Wynne Home Arts Center

Summer Art Classes
Beginning July 14th
All ages welcome
Registration begins June 16th



Visit the Wynne Home Art Center today!
1428 Eleventh Street
Huntsville, Texas

For information regarding registration
contact:
Jasmine Moss
Wynne Home Intern
(936) 291 5424
Wynneintern@huntsvilletx.gov
www.thewynnehome.com

Early Bird Art Camp

Early Bird Art Camp

Ages 6-7, 8-9, and 10+
9:00a.m. - 12:00p.m.

Session I: July 14-17
Session II: July 21-24
Session III: July 28-31



Classes will include:

- ♣ Paper Mache
- ♣ Ceramics
- ♣ Crafts & Gardening



Check out news from your library! The library publication *Between the Pages* is available by email subscription on the City's website. Visit www.huntsvilletx.gov and click on the Stay Notified button to subscribe.

Between the Pages offers news about library programming, technology and online applications available with your library card, new staff and services from the Huntsville Public Library, volunteering, and more!

You can always find the latest issue on the City's home page under the Publications tab, archives of back issues are on the website at <http://bit.ly/1HDKsbX>.

Seen on the right, recent Children's Patron of the Month Darnesha Evans is a library fan and was in the May issue!





Photo Call!

Here at the City, we hope you have one of the 2014-2015 City calendars and are enjoying it! However, it's now time to think about the 2015-2016 calendar, and we'd love your help with it. Please submit photos taken in City parks, at City events, or of groups working with the City on occasions such as All Paws In or the Spring Clean - anything City-related.



Maybe you attended the Fourth of July celebration or E-Recycling Day, or took the kids to an Outdoor Explorer class and have a great picture. Or perhaps your group received a proclamation or made a donation or participated in Local Government Day.

We'd love to see your photos and consider them for the next calendar. The City of Huntsville is asking all residents, business owners and organizations to submit their best photos for use in the calendar, on our Facebook and Twitter accounts, in our digital newsletter, and maybe even for upcoming special projects.

Please submit original photography along with the name of the photographer for photo credit. The City requests participants send the highest resolution copies available, and that only material suitable for all ages be submitted.

Digital photos smaller than 20 MB may be emailed to lwoodward@huntsvilletx.gov (please make contact with us before trying to send larger files). The City requests any hard copies be brought to City Hall, located at 1212 Avenue M. If necessary, hard copies will be scanned and returned to the provider. For more information, contact Woodward at (936) 291-5403.

Remembering Our Nation's Birth

For the fourth year in a row, the Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association held a public reading of the Declaration of Independence at the Courthouse gazebo. The reading is a reminder of the precious liberties our nation's founders fought and died for.

The reading is held in the morning on the last business day before July 4 each year. Members of the public of all ages are invited to attend and participate in the reading, and many City and County officials have joined in annually (*photos below and right*).

The reading has spread to more and more counties across the state, and last year there was also a reading in London on the steps of Parliament. The 2016 reading is expected on Friday, July 1.



City Employee Recognized by United Way of the Piney Woods

Dr. Sherry McKibben, Neighborhood Resources Director for the City of Huntsville, was recently awarded a Certificate of Gratitude by the United Way of the Piney Woods. The organization thanked her for her "selfless commitment of time, gift of talent and passion for improving lives and strengthening communities in the Piney Woods."

UWPW Director Sheila Cannon expressed her appreciation of Dr. McKibben's service as the City's campaign liaison and for her work as a UWPW Board Member.



Summer Fantasy and Silliness at the Wynne Home Arts Center

Come join us for movie night on Mondays July 13, July 20, and July 27 at 7:00 p.m. Adults and families with children 10 years and older are welcome. Chilled drinks and popcorn will be provided for these free events!

Featured films are:

- July 13, Spoof - *The Court Jester* starring Danny Kaye
- July 20, Fantasy - *The Princess Bride* by William Goldman
- July 27, Slapstick - *Why Worry* starring Harold Lloyd

For more information, please call 936-291-5424 or email us at wynneintern@huntsvilletx.gov.

Visit www.thewynnehome.com or like us on our Facebook page at WynneHomeArtsCenter for photos and news. The Wynne Home Arts Center is located at 1428 Eleventh Street.



Local Disaster Recovery Center Opens for Texas Flood Survivors

A State/FEMA Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) is now open in Walker County for homeowners, renters and business owners who sustained damage as a result of the severe storms, tornadoes and flooding from May 4 to June 19. Specialists from the State of Texas, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), nongovernmental organizations and the local community are on hand to answer questions and provide information on the types of assistance available to survivors. Services are provided in English and Spanish.

The recovery center serves survivors from any of the 36 counties designated for Individual Assistance who need one-on-one help. State and federal professionals will be available to assist eligible survivors get help as quickly as possible.

Location and hours of operation:

Walker County Annex, Early Voting Room

1301 Sam Houston Ave.nue

Huntsville, TX 77340

9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday

9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, closed Sunday

The DRC will cease operations at 6 p.m. on Friday, July 17

Those who had storm damage can register for FEMA assistance online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov or call **800-621-3362** toll free from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily until further notice. Multilingual operators are available.

Disaster assistance applicants who have a speech disability or hearing loss and use TTY should call 800-462-7585 directly; for those who use 711 or Video Relay Service (VRS), call 800-621-3362. The toll-free telephone numbers will operate from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. (local time) seven days a week until further notice.

Some of the services may include:

- Guidance regarding disaster recovery
- Clarification of any written correspondence received
- Housing Assistance and Rental Resources information
- Answers to questions, resolutions to problems and referrals to agencies that may provide further assistance
- Status of applications being processed by FEMA

For more information on Texas recovery, visit the disaster web page at www.fema.gov/disaster/4223.

Twitter at <https://www.twitter.com/femaregion6> and the Texas Division of Emergency Management website, <https://www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem>.

CITY SPOTLIGHT

Recently, The Huntsville Item asked the City to begin a series called *City Spotlight*, which will highlight projects and provide information on staff, services, and more. *City Spotlight* is expected to run every other Sunday. Below and opposite are two articles from June and July. If you happened to miss them in the Item we hope you enjoy reading them here!

Defining Good Governance

Good governance is a catchphrase these days, perhaps it always has been, but defining it clearly can be difficult. One could start with an idea of governance as "all processes of governing, whether undertaken by a government, market or network, whether over a family, tribe, formal or informal organization or territory and whether through laws, norms, power or language." (Bevir, Mark (2013). *Governance: A very short introduction*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.) Then add the weighty and possibly endless chain of argument over how to clarify "good" and you've probably got a lengthy and passionate discussion brewing.

At the City of Huntsville, how to define good governance, and how many words in which documents are required to explain it, has an ongoing focus of importance to all.

A primary reference is the City Charter, adopted by the voters of the City of Huntsville in 1968 (available on the City web site at <http://tx-huntsville.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/1440>). The Charter is like the nation's constitution or the bylaws of an organized society, laying out the authority by which the City as an entity exists, and its primary structure and functions. Like the U.S. Constitution, it is only amended by the electorate, with any proposed changes on an election ballot.

The Charter was last amended in November of 2013. It cannot be brought before the voters more frequently than every two years, and the City of Huntsville's charter requires that it be reviewed at least every five years.

Section 4.08, Rules of Procedure, of the City Charter begins, "*The Council shall by ordinance determine its own rules and order of business...*" leading to the City Council's Rules of Procedure. Like standing rules of an organization, these are adopted by the City Council itself, and can be amended by its vote, as it sees fit. Often revised on an annual basis, the Rules were last updated in May of 2014.

The Rules of Procedure covers such topics as conduct, order of business on Council agendas, and standing Council Committees, and other administrative issues. It includes the City Council's decision to conduct its meetings with the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, as its parliamentary authority. Under such, as a board of fewer than a dozen, the Council is provided with flexibility and the ability to adapt to its own customs.

The main idea behind using parliamentary procedure in a meeting is to preserve the rights of all (the majority, the minority, and absentees) while conducting business as efficiently as possible, even when feelings run high and participants have strong opinions on the matters at hand. This ensures that everyone has an opportunity to be heard and participate and has an equal vote in each matter.

City Councils generally attract opinionated but thoughtful individuals who are charged with setting policy for their city, and seek to do so in the most beneficial way possible for their community. Some of the decisions Councilmembers have to make are tough, but when a variety of outlooks collide, the Rules of Procedure help the Council remain unified in their approach to find solutions.

The City Council Rules of Procedure also cover the ways in which citizens can address the Council. The 2014 Rules amendments included a way for members of the public can place items on the Council agenda. The process allows Councilmembers to be provided background on the item and to deliberate it with the citizen at the meeting.

Prior to the 2014 changes, discussion of this sort was not possible, because citizens could only bring up new topics under the old general public comments policy. Since the item hadn't been posted for public notice, the Council was, by state law, only able to ask questions or make statements of face. The inability to have a dialogue with the resident bringing the issue forward was frustrating to both parties.

This provides a perfect example of why the Rules of Procedure is reviewed so regularly. It may be that a real or perceived flaw in the way things are done exists and needs correction. After legislative session changes, or after learning of a way to handle something differently, the Rules may need updating to stay current.

Above all, though, are state laws that provide the guidelines under which Huntsville exists as a home rule city, which permit it to make the decisions provided for in the Charter, and also outline how much of the business of the City is conducted, from purchasing to law enforcement to record keeping. Two that are often mentioned are found in the Texas Government Code, Chapter 551, known familiarly as the Open Meetings Act, and Chapter 552, called the Public Information Act.

The Open Meetings Act provides for timely posting of assemblies of governing bodies, including the date, time, place, and items to be discussed, so that members of the public can decide whether they would like to attend or observe these deliberations and possible actions. Cities can choose to permit public comment at these meetings, as the Huntsville City Council does, and by what procedures.

The Public Information Act (which used to be commonly referred to as the Open Records Act) directs the ways in which public records can be requested of and produced by an entity such as a municipality, school district, or state agency, among others.

Effective, efficient, transparent, transaction of business is the reason the employees of the City of Huntsville come to work each day, and the members of the City Council gather on the first and third Tuesday evenings of the month. Local government is where citizens can have the most impact on what affects their lives daily, and local control means that cities can make the decisions that fit their residents best, wherever they are located in the great state of Texas.

CITY SPOTLIGHT

Street Condition Assessment

The city has approximately 150 linear miles of streets of various pavement types, although most are asphalt paved streets. The City of Huntsville's Street Division in the Public Works Department annually evaluates street conditions to prioritize maintenance issues including subsurface failure repair, crack sealing, chip sealing and asphalt overlays. However, a comprehensive street condition assessment to prioritize and plan maintenance on a long-range but timely and economically prudent basis has long been overdue, the last such assessment being done about thirty years ago, in the mid 1980s (when there were about half as many miles).

As a result, the City contracted with Infrastructure Management Services (IMS) to perform the work. The firm was selected on the basis of their experience and positive references, and has provided services in a number of Texas cities such as Carrollton, Farmers Branch, Pearland, Beaumont, Denton, Keller, Euless and Weatherford.

Matt Benoit, City Manager, noted that the main goal in achieving a valuable street condition assessment is to gather large amounts of quality data to determine the disposition of the street network. He explained the two primary purposes in conducting a street study, the first being to maximize and enhance existing street maintenance activities and the second to ensure and justify large capital investments.

"In the realm of street maintenance, the conditions cities attempt to avoid are "reconstruction" or "rebuild," said Benoit. "From cost/square foot and inconvenience to residents standpoints, reconstruction and rebuild are to be avoided at all costs. Whenever possible, maintenance efforts should be focused on maintenance efforts that invest the minimum amount of money but still avoid reconstruction or rebuild."

This study will classify the community's streets by age, condition and recommended maintenance to "stay ahead of the curve" and avoid reconstruction. Such a goal is possible in this era, with available technologies such as Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR), instrumented rollers, and High Resolution 3D. The primary service IMS will provide the City is a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) reading for every City street in the network.

This will be done using automated technology utilizing eleven lasers capable of identifying and collecting instances of street deterioration and locations including: wheel path rutting, transverse cracking, block cracking, alligator cracking and texture. The information collected will be assembled to rate each of the City's streets as "Good," "Fair," or "Poor." Further, each street segment will be assigned a PCI score ranging from 1 (worst street) to 100 (essentially a brand new street).

With the PCI condition, IMS will:

- Provide Modeling – in the form of scenarios that graphically illustrate the City's street network over time to determine the effects of "doing nothing," "current funding" and "fix all" scenarios to determine appropriate and affordable funding levels.
- PCI and funding levels – illustrate the estimated costs of elevating and maintaining streets at a given PCI level (of 75, 80 and 85).
- Provide multi-year rehabilitation and prioritized paving plans for the funding and service levels selected by the City.

Two additional services that may be requested include dynaflect testing and assigning a PCI for the State roads. Dynaflect testing is used to assess the relative "strength" and structural integrity of a street by measuring how much the pavement reacts when a vertical load is placed on it. It is the most realistic simulation of how traffic affects a pavement surface, but it is non-destructive to the surface. Dynaflect testing will likely be used on those streets whose PCI ratings are "borderline" between conventional maintenance techniques and expensive repair or rebuild.

The City may also request a PCI for the state-maintained roads if there is a desire to assess their condition in relation to the City's street network. This information may be helpful as TxDOT occasionally requests the City take responsibility for State-owned road assets and/or if the City wishes to request specific attention to TxDOT roads in Huntsville.

In all likelihood, through this study, the City will discover some streets that meet the reconstruction or rebuild conditions. The City may be well served to set those aside (to the degree possible) and consider them for a possible bond issuance in the 2018-2019 time frame. As part of the City Council's 2014 Strategic Plan, City staff investigated and reported to the City Council an opportunity to issue somewhere between \$16 and \$18.5 million worth of General Obligation debt without raising the tax rate that will occur as early as 2018.

As a result, City staff discussed with the Council during FY 14-15 budget deliberations conducting several studies on the City's major infrastructure components to ensure all possibilities are considered if and when the decision is made to request voter consent to issue replacement debt. The street condition assessment will answer several questions about the condition and estimated costs to repair and/or replace portions of the City's street infrastructure.

At the conclusion of this study, the City will know conclusively which streets are candidates for continued and/or enhanced maintenance practices and which streets will be candidates for consideration of a bond package (including cost estimates). Benoit explained other potential benefits of a complete street condition assessment.

"First, if the City became 10% more efficient or effective with our street maintenance activities, we could save the City \$50,000 annually just by tailoring our maintenance efforts to the known street conditions. Second, if there is even a 10% reduction in scope identified with better information about the subsurface conditions, the City might save \$120,000 on certain identified projects."

The IMS truck was out driving the streets at approximately 15 miles per hour, gathering the data needed. As an unexpected plus, the project was completed in fewer days than expected, so City staff can begin sooner to know what the future holds for connectivity throughout the community.



Thank you, Huntsville Garden Club!

Each year, the Huntsville Public Library receives generous donations from the Huntsville Garden Club, and celebrates National Garden Week with a display. The Huntsville Garden Club was established in 1933 and seeks among its aims to stimulate the knowledge and satisfaction of gardening, encourage civic planning and beautification, promote responsible recycling, and work on conservation projects.

Their donations and efforts throughout the community are greatly appreciated!

Members pictured above from left are Gloria Graves, Shirley Belanger, and Nan O'Leary.

Outdoor Explorer

Join the City's Recreation Services Division at the Huntsville State Park as they partner with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to learn basic safety for biking, hiking and kayaking. Then enjoy the rest of the day exploring the State Park with backpacks, bikes and kayaks provided for use. Class size is limited to twenty participants and pre-registration is **required**. Classes are from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Youth ages 12 - 17 can register with an attending parent or guardian.

Upcoming program dates are June 20th, July 18th, August 15th, and September 19th. There is no charge for the program but there is a \$5 admission fee into the park for each participating adult (no cost for those 12 and under). For more information call 936-294-5725 or visit the website at <http://www.huntsvilletx.gov/category/subcategory.php?categoryid=12> or on Facebook at COHrecservices.

Water Aerobics

Join the City of Huntsville at the Huntsville Frank D. "Poncho" Roberts Aquatic Center for the return of Water Aerobics. Classes will be Monday through Wednesday mornings from 8 - 9 a.m., and Monday through Thursday evenings from 8 - 9 p.m. Participants must be 18 years or older and are required to complete a registration form and pay a fee of \$55.00 for the year or purchase a day pass for \$4.

Registration is available at the City of Huntsville Service Center or before class at the Huntsville Aquatic Center. For more information, call 936-294-5725 or visit the website at http://www.huntsvilletx.gov/departments/community_services/recreation.htm.

Downtown Huntsville

FARMERS

MARKET



**Buy
Local**

Saturdays 8am - Noon
Starting May 9th

Fresh Produce

tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, green beans, bok choy,
cabbage, preserves, spices, honey, yard eggs, herbs

PLUS

metal art, leather & wood working goods, dog cookies,
natural bath & beauty products, handmade jewelry

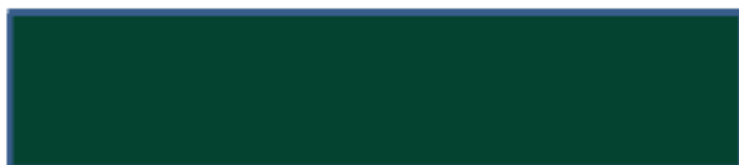
University Avenue East side of the Courthouse Square

facebook.com/COHmainstreet



Feel the STING!

Get a Flag!



Citizens across the community are stepping up to share the good news in our school district, and demonstrate their support for our kids, teachers, and administrative staff. You can join them by donating for Hornet Pride flags flown around the Square and downtown (to assist with flags, poles, and supplies), or by purchasing flags to fly at home or your business on football game days, or any time! It's a simple way to stand together and let the Hornets know we're all pulling for them!



I'm going to help fill the downtown with Hornet Spirit! \$35 or more _____

I want to join the Swarm at home & work with extra flags! \$25 X _____

(For each \$25 flag, note whether you need side pocket or grommets, please!)

Total: \$ _____

Donated by: _____

Mailing address: _____

Email address: _____

If you prefer to donate by mail, please send to:

Hornet Flag Project
c/o Chamber of Commerce
Post Office Box 538
Huntsville, TX 77342

For information or to pay by credit card: 936-291-8113

